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By *WV* NARA Date *9/4/01*~~CONFIDENTIAL~~
SECURITY INFORMATION

AIR INTELLIGENCE INFORMATION REPORT

EP 6

FROM (Agency) 7050th A.I.S. WING		REPORT NO. 39361-3-924F		PAGE 1 OF 3 PAGES	
PLACE WHITE SEA CANAL	WAC NO 92 or 102	FN	EVAL F-0	IN CODE NO	
POLITICAL LOCATION ARKHANGELSKAYA OBLAST		DESCRIPTIVE NAME OF REPORT Use of Atomic Power for Blasting Work			
SOVIET ECON. REGION NORTHWEST	PROPER NAME	IMENI	DATES OF INFORMATION FROM August 1948 TO --		

PREAMBLE:

In August 1948 SOURCE was transferred with a transport of PWs from VILNYUS (54 40 N, 25 20 E) over MOSKVA (55 45 N, 37 37 E) to the area of the white sea canal. The area of the location of this PW camp, the number of which was not available, was assumed to be somewhere in the vicinity of ARKHANGELSK (64 34 N, 40 32 E). SOURCE worked there for only 2 weeks as a supervisor of a PW camp team. On this job he could only gain observation of the condition of the terrain and the construction site. His information concerning the technical data and the explosions he received from a PW engineer who worked on this site since 1942. It was very difficult to get the information, since the PWs were extremely closely guarded and even speaking to each other was forbidden. In spite of this, SOURCE arranged to meet this engineer in the latrine to speak with him. Information on the health condition after the explosions were partially from this engineer and partially experienced by SOURCE himself. He was recalled to MOSKVA after 2 weeks.

The transport of the PWs arrived on the marshalling yard of ARKHANGELSK in the early afternoon. The name of this town was clearly identified on a name plate on the station. Here the entire transport was subdivided into two separate groups. SOURCE later heard from a fellow PW who was not in SOURCE's group that he was transferred to the canal which connected the White Sea with the Lake LADOGA. The group, SOURCE belonged to, about 1,200 PWs, was loaded into closely tighted box cars which were secured with barbed wire, and the ventilation holes of which were closed. With the beginning of dawn the train departed, stopped after a short distance for another 15 minutes and then it started again. According to SOURCE's estimation, this train travelled about 70 km per hour. It stopped once again for about half an hour. The entire transfer lasted about 5 to 6 hours, and when the PWs went out of the railroad cars at the destination place, they found themselves in a completely desert area. The further transport was made by trucks. It lasted about 1½ hours. There were no constructed roads, only field paths. The general direction during this transfer was to the rising sun. The terrain was almost completely plain, overgrown with a grass cover here and there with a few bushes or scattered birch woods. No signs of agriculture or human settlements were seen. The ground was partially swampy. The PWs were housed in tents and provisional wooden barracks. SOURCE found out that about 3,500 German PWs were here, but the newcomers could hardly get contact with these PWs. They were housed in another camp which also consisted of tents and wooden barracks. A Russian military unit was garrisoned here. It was believed to be a penal unit. Its strength was estimated to be 500. The members of this unit were armed either with sub machine guns or carbines. Guard towers which were irregularly erected in the area were equipped with machine guns. The quarters of the unit were also tents and provisional wooden barracks. SOURCE did not see any person wearing civilian clothes. The construction engineers were military personnel and the supervision on the construction sites was done by PW engineers. SOURCE worked on the west bank of the southern section of what was believed to be a newly constructed canal. Its approximate direction was north-south or southeast. The canal was under construction from two sides, these two construction sections had been built up so far that they were separated only by a remaining land strip of 1,200 to 1,500 m. The water had a very slight current to the North. This canal was about 250 m wide at its upper edge and the depth of the water was estimated to be 6 to 8 m. The banks were plain and sloped at an angle of about 45 degrees. The west bank, about 6 m higher than the water level, reinforced with broken rock, fastened with concrete. It was observed that the east bank was also reinforced, but work had not progressed so far to the North than on the west bank. From his vantage point, the southern canal section, SOURCE could observe that the east bank of the northern construction site was also reinforced.

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AIR INTELLIGENCE INFORMATION REPORT

FROM (Agency)	REPORT NO.	PAGE	OF	PAGES
7050th A.I.S.WING	39361-3-924F	2	3	

Since the terrain along the canal was slightly hilly, with level differences of 2 and 2.5 m, dams were constructed here and there along the canal, 4 and 5 m high at the utmost. The exact course of this water was unknown to SOURCE and he did not know to where it was connected. The land strip, about 1,500 m long which separated the two construction sections looked like grubbed up after the third explosion had taken place. Rocks were picked out of the soil and were used to reinforce the banks. Sixteen floating dredges were on work on the south construction section and 6 dredges were seen on the north section, but it was believed that there were also more of them. Broken rock and cement was brought by barges and were unloaded by the PWs at a place, about 2.5 km south of the construction site. A few of the barges which were 35 m long, were self propelled, most of them were pulled by diesel driven tug boats which were propeller driven. These vessels had no names, but the following markings: tugs followed by a number of four digits, and barges with a number of three digits. The crews of the boats generally wore blue uniforms which were believed to be the Navy uniforms, and most of them were armed with small arms. The crews of the barges generally wore no uniforms. SOURCE heard from the PW engineer that this canal was begun to be constructed during the war. By occasional short discussions with the above-mentioned PW engineer, SOURCE gained the following information: The stripe of land which separated the two construction sites was blown up by three explosions, the first of which was of experimental character the second was considered to be the main explosion, and the last one seemed to be of minor power. Due to the preparations, the velocity of the explosion, its outer concomitant phenomena and the reactions observed on the human beings, this engineer came to the conclusion that no conventional explosives, but explosives of the atomic power series were used. The first explosion happened in June 1948. Preparations for this explosion began about 10 days before. They were carried out by members of a special unit who were never observed here before. The strength of the unit was unknown as well as the place where it came from. The uniforms were not available. The entire construction site was blocked during this time and the PWs were transferred to a place, about 5 km south of the construction site. The explosion happened in a night in the first third of June, on the north tip of the landstrip. One short detonation was heard and the wooden barrack in which the engineer was housed fell down. Many tents were blown away. About 100 PWs were hurt by this event. Three or four days after that explosion nobody was seen on the construction site. Later work was continued as usual. It was observed that a few members of the special unit were still here. They departed a few days later. After that it was observed that extremely many PWs collapsed who worked in the area where the explosion had taken place. These PWs were examined by 6 or 7 Russian doctors who came here after the explosion, and stayed here for about 2 weeks. The sick PWs were transferred, but SOURCE never heard where they came and what happened to them. From then on, the PWs got better food, and milk and butter in addition. The PWs were examined every second day by Russian doctors. This engineer declared that he himself observed an increase of blood pressure and heart beating, and breathing was more rapid than usual. The second explosion which was believed to be the main detonation took place on the 4th or 5th of August 1948. The engineer was not able to collect any observation on the preparations, since all PWs were loaded on barges and were brought to the South. They stayed on these barges the whole time through, and according to vague estimations, they were transported about 80 km away from the explosion site. The explosion happened in the third night after the PWs' departure. An extreme bright shine was observed increasing and decreasing which had a faint shade of green. The glow remained at the horizon for a time which was estimated to be less than a full minute. A thunder like sound was heard after the glow vanished. Three days after that, the PWs landed again at the construction site. A new transport of PWs had arrived in the meantime. There was no work carried out on the explosion site for 9 or 10 days. About the same health injuries as after the first explosion were observed. The engineer stated that he felt a certain dizziness in his head, and he was at loss of breath. The third explosion happened the night the transport SOURCE was with, was on the way from ARKHANGELSK to the construction area. SOURCE mentioned that he observed a very bright flush on the transport, although the railroad box cars were almost completely tightened.

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AIR INTELLIGENCE INFORMATION REPORT

FROM (Agency) 7050th A.I.S. WING	REPORT NO. 39361-3-924F	PAGE 3 OF 3 PAGES
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followed by a thunder like sound, but it was generally believed that there was a thunderstorm. SOURCE had the impression that the glow he saw through the cracks of the car was flickering. When SOURCE arrived there were no PWs, and he learned later that the PWs were evacuated in the same way as before the second explosion. The four days after their arrival the PWs were only employed on unloading of barges, about 2.5 km south of the explosion site. The fifth day after the explosion the landed material was carried to the south end of the band strip, and other PWs were employed taking the rocks out of the blown up terrain. SOURCE felt that his blood pressure was higher than normal and he had rapid heart beating. Pustules appeared in the face and at the hands and these body portions were also slightly swollen. He also felt his skin itch. In general, SOURCE described the reactions similar to those he observed when he touched this stuff, called "pek", refer to point 3, report 39361-3-924B. Security orders in this area were extremely strict. Speaking to each other was completely forbidden, and SOURCE heard from fellow PWs that a PW was severely punished because he spoke while he was asleep. The Russians were forbidden to come closer to a PW than 3 m. The area was not fenced. Here and there barbed wire fences were observed which seemed to have no connection. Guard towers were erected over the entire area which were equipped with machine guns. The guards made use of their weapons without any warning. There were guards inside the barracks and roving between the tents even during the night. The death-rate was enormous. On the east bank of the canal there was a construction which could not be positively identified, but SOURCE mentioned that it looked like a bunker. No instruments of any kind were observed in the area.

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